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ABSTRACT

Contemporary understandings and practices of adult literacy and adult basic education need to reestablish a substantial connection with ancient rhetoric as at once a political tradition, a culture of language use, a storehouse of metalanguage, and as an ensemble of pedagogic strategies and exercises. Developed in ancient Greece, rhetoric was for 2300 years the dominant form of education for ruling class men in all European communities. It was an education designed to cultivate and form the attributes of community citizens and leaders, and it trained boys and young men in the art of persuasive public speech. Rhetorical education was an education in cultural content called "inventio" and an education in language called "elocutio." The three genres of rhetoric, defined by Aristotle by their social contexts, included (1) epideictic rhetoric, a discourse of praise celebrating heroes and community values; (2) deliberative rhetoric, a discourse of advice designed to evaluate and determine the best course of action in cases of conflict and uncertainty; and (3) forensic rhetoric, which is judicial discourse used in accusing or defending those suspected of wrong-doing. Rhetoric was not used solely to teach language, but to find truth. It often culminated in rhetorical performance that was organized in five steps used to prepare an eloquent speech. Rhetoric can be used as a basis for understanding and improving student speech and thinking skills. (An example of the use of rhetoric in a workshop with Indigenous Australian adults beginning higher education studies is provided, along with an appendix illustrating rhetoric in student speech.) (KC)

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by Rob McCormack

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Back to the 3 R's: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric

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Abstract

This paper will argue that contemporary understandings and practices of adult literacy and adult basic education need to re-establish a substantial connection with ancient rhetoric as at once a political tradition, a culture of language use, a store-house of metalanguage and as an ensemble of pedagogic strategies and exercises. This claim will be illustrated by reference to a Communications Unit devised by the author for Indigenous Australian adults commencing Higher Education studies.

In this paper I do three things. First I describe why I have become committed to an exploration and appropriation of ancient rhetoric as a body of educational practice and theory. Secondly I outline some of the key terms and practices of ancient rhetoric. Finally, I outline the sort of curriculum that is emerging from these explorations and reflections on ancient rhetoric and its potential in the contemporary world.

Why have I become interested in ancient rhetoric?

Two motives in my life have conspired to focus my attention on ancient rhetoric. One is an abstract theoretical response to the increasing rationalisation of education through frameworks of accountability and outcomes. The other is a quite specific experience in which my students - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults beginning tertiary studies - taught me new possibilities in my pedagogy.

First, the theoretical response to the increasing rationalisation of education through the formulation and imposition of outcomes-based accountability frameworks. During the early 90s I found myself thrust into the state and national effort to formulate categories for the governance of language and literacy work with adults in Australia. My own interest was two-fold: I was deeply committed to 'second-chance education', that is the provision of an equivalent of mainstream schooling for adults who for whatever reason - cultural, social, personal, or linguistic - were unable to benefit from childhood schooling. I called this Adult Basic Education to distinguish it from Adult Literacy which I saw as committed to providing the equivalent of primary schooling only. In order to specify this educational domain without reducing it to a mirror of the subjects in the school curriculum, I developed the notion of four literacies which were the capacities needed for participation in four regions or domains of social practice. They were literacy for practical purposes; literacy for public citizenship, literacy for personal development, and literacy for cognitive development. These categories were taken up into the bureaucratic efforts to formulate the outcomes and competencies of adult language and literacy pedagogy. In this way I myself got dragged into the vortex of this governmental drive to formulate the governing categories of this new field of adult education.

However I found myself intuitively at odds with the entire exercise. My sense of the meaning of my own life is as an educator and the meaning of categories of governance for me was as collegial concepts arising from the detailed experiences of communities of practice. I was interested in categories of governance in which practitioners could recognize their own practices and ideals, through which they could measure their differences from other practitioners because of the particularities of their circumstances, students, history or context, categories that distilled the historic experience of a community of practice, categories that provide images, metaphors and ideas that provoke practitioners into deeper insight and reflection on their own practice and its

meanings, categories that both express and distil our sense of belonging to a community of practice and suggest aspirations, values and potential lines of development for practitioners.

As a result of this dissonance between my sense of how categories function within a community of practitioners and the government's sense of how categories function within accountability frameworks, I took time out to explore this contradiction in a PhD. titled: *Adult Basic Education as Practical Philosophy: an Hermeneutic Account* in which I discovered an ancient but now repressed practice of governance: practical philosophy. This older tradition is concerned with a governance that is grounded in the habitus of practitioners, not the formulation of regulatory texts with a transparent relationship to a transparent reality. Unlike the textualism of modern rationalist forms of governance, this older tradition is focused on the inadequacy of written texts, their ambiguities and their thinness in face of overdetermined conflicted and contested situations of application and therefore of their inherent need for interpretation and supplementation by 'practically wise' practitioners. Governance on this model is primarily in the hands of phronemos-practitioners who interpret and apply texts, whereas governance on the rationalist model is primarily in the hands of legislators-the authors of the texts of governance.

However, and this brings us back to the theme of this paper, the critical educational context for producing *phronemos* and their capacities for community governance was ancient rhetoric. Ancient rhetoric was a pedagogy precisely designed to produce community leaders, leaders who could formulate abstract categories and their application that enacted a process of governance based on articulation of differences, insight into commonalities and formulation of consensus in situations of conflicting interpretations and interests. This consensus was based on the ability of the rhetor to persuade, not on the imposition of power. The power of speech not the power of violence or the violence of power.

Metalinguistic awareness

The fact that rhetoric was an art of speaking, was the way that speaking was brought to consciousness and pedagogic attention in order to consciously reshape and extend one's language capacities also solved another issue facing me. For many year I had been a fellow traveller of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) because it provided a set of concepts for analysing language thereby providing a meta-vocabulary for discussing language with students and a framework for scaffolding teaching and learning activities. However, I have found myself increasingly unhappy with SFL and its current directions. For what it's worth, my view is that even though Halliday may be correct in breaking language into three metafunctions, this does not mean that all work should be modularized into these three distinct dimensions. In my view, the interest and focus of language pedagogy is precisely the nodal points or pressure points where the three dimensions of language intersect. Yet it seems that SFL is not concerned to name these points of intersection in any 'thick' way, preferring the 'lean and mean' labelling of distinct metafunctions.

So, imagine my pleasure at discovering that traditional rhetoric had already developed an arsenal of terms and categories for picking out conjunctures of language that intensify the making of meaning. An extensive region of the art of rhetoric called *elocutio* (style) is concerned to identify, name and explain the entire range of intensification phenomena in language in ways designed to be pedagogically fruitful. Of course the romantically inclined who find all technical language ridiculous and cling to the insights of unaided intuition will find it easy to laugh at the fantastic armory of terms developed by rhetoric to identify the linguistic moments of intensification it wished to cultivate and master-terms such as *anastrophe, zeugma, asyndeton, hyperbaton, isocolon, litotes*, and so on.

However, even though the invention of metalinguistic jargon did get out of hand during the Renaissance, there should be no 'in principle' objection to the development of a powerful metalanguage and I am finding that most of the terms carried in the tradition of rhetoric to be useful. It is perhaps worth making the point right here that rhetoric is not a theoretically-driven tradition, it is a practically-driven, or even more accurately, a pedagogically-driven tradition. This means that the invention, up-take and survival of metalinguistic terms depends on their practical

usefulness in teaching and learning how to speak more powerfully. Rhetorical terms survive because they have pedagogic capital, not intellectual or theoretical capital. This is also why one must learn not to fret at the mysteriousness of the relations between rhetorical terms. They have not been developed on a one dimensional analytic surface , but on the surface of practical language where phenomena overlap and intersect in impossibly complex ways.

Learning from students

Having dealt with the theoretical advantages of rhetoric over modern linguistics, even including SFL, I now move onto the other strand of the story of my entry into an enthrallment with ancient rhetoric. I teach at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, a higher education college for indigenous adults in Australia. For many of these students, English is a second (or third, fourth, fifth, ...) language; and for all these students their schooling was unsatisfactory. Trying to create fruitful pedagogic strategies for such students is a great and enjoyable challenge.

During 1999, an annual week of NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Observance Committee) celebrations fell during a week I was workshopping a class. The theme of the celebrations was Respect. I was faced with a decision: try to ignore the larger community celebrations or let the class be subordinated to the themes and events of the week's activities. With some misgivings I decided on the latter course: I would allow the flow of activities within the workshop to be subordinated to the flow of activities in the larger context. This was not an easy decision to take; and I lived on tenter-hooks right up until the very last moment of the workshop. It took a lot of trust, almost a gesture of abandonment, and a deep sense of risk and threat of accusations of incompetence or irresponsibility to open up the workshop in this way.

To cut a long story short, what happened was this: the students took control of the class and became determined to win the prize for the best decorated room but constructing 'a journey of respect' for the rest of the institute staff and students to undertake. This lead to a chaotic array of activities that included much cutting, pasting, painting and decorating. I found my self pacing up and down outside the room too anguished to enter and put a stop to it, so we could get on with some real work on the theme of Respect. Have you even had to watch two grown women spend a whole day just laying down the background colour for a poster. It is almost impossible for a whitefella like myself to resist shouting 'Stop going over and over that background, Just get on with what you want to paint on that background; don't you understand the relationship between figure and background? The background it just there to show up the figure you are foregrounding. So, get on with it!'

The upshot: the workshop was a great success; the students were deeply proud of their work; they insisted to all and sundry; that it was the best workshop they had ever been in; that they had learnt more in that workshop than in any other and so on. I was again faced with one of those epiphanic moments: should I listen to what they were saying or not? I still in my heart did not accept what they were saying. How could they have learnt more than in well-organized teacher-lead workshop? Frankly, in my heart of hearts I did not believe them, but because it was a cross-cultural context I had to give them the benefit of the doubt. The whole point of a cross cultural context is that you cannot trust your own intuitions or assume that your own perceptions and responses are shared by others.

So, I decided to trust the students. I would listen to them and follow their lead. I would develop workshops in terms of the principles they developed in that Respect workshop and allow lots of criticism and feed back to guide the development of the later workshops.

So what were the principles these students established at the Journey of Respect workshop. I would summarise them along these lines:

- language must be language in action
- learning must bring together work across all semiotic media
- learning can be heightened by competition

- learning should lead to a risky and real final performance
- a workshop should build in tension and emotion and risk as it unfolds
- a workshop should be an 'experience' that is remembered and discussed
- learning is takes place when we experience a conjuncture of thematically organized meanings and discourses
- artistic work can be a form of sitting with, a form of meditation, not a mindless
- learning is learning to speak for, not just speak about.

The principles these students taught me complemented those I was learning in ancient rhetoric: both emphasised language as public performance; both emphasised the power of language to create a narrative of experience in which learning can be effected. As a result of the conjuncture of two pressures-the theoretical pressure to reframe pedagogy in a non-theoreticist and non-representationalist way and the pedagogic pressure from my students and their ways of learning-I have begun a slow but intense investigation of ancient European rhetoric.

Rhetoric: what is it?

So, what is ancient European rhetoric? What are its principles, its themes, its values, its pedagogic strategies, its cultural practices?

Before I begin this rapid (and inevitably superficial) survey of rhetoric, I should first make the point that rhetoric is a tradition of the *longue durée* to use a term from French historians. Rhetoric has a continuous unbroken tradition of practice and of theorisation as reflection on that practice stretching over 2400 years. This tradition exists principally in the daily practices of teachers and students of rhetoric and the 'social imaginary' enacted and passed on through these educational practices and sometimes in the social and cultural practices and aspirations of the wider society. The point I am making is that rhetoric exists primarily as 'lore' and only secondarily as 'theory'.

This is important because although we know that there have been hundreds of rhetoric textbooks over the centuries, most have been lost without trace. The few that we still possess such as Cicero, Aristotle, Quintilian, Hermogenes, Isocrates, Longinus, Augustine have survived (often precariously) because they have been copied and re-copied over and over again. In a sense, manuscript culture was a perfect system for sifting out 'classic texts', texts that have something to say to each new generation. Even so, both Aristotle's *The Art of Rhetoric* and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* were for centuries lost or fragmented. Luckily the Byzantium Empire nurtured, renewed and extended the ancient Greek tradition of rhetoric.

The upshot of this history of manuscripts is that a rhetoric text survived because it was a good textbook, not because it was a good treatise on rhetoric. And as a teacher I like this. I like the fact that the concepts and categories in these ancient rhetoric texts are oriented to the language classroom, not the academic lecture theatre.

One reason why rhetoric is a better framework for formulating the pedagogy of adults and their language is that it was evolved by classroom teachers precisely in order to shed light on their classroom strategies of teaching. Modern linguistics by contrast has evolved as a theoretical enterprise bent on describing languages as abstract systems of difference. The concepts of modern linguistics and semiotics have not evolved within the provenance of the language classroom, but in the context of academic explanation and dispute.

So, to return to the question: what is ancient rhetoric? how does it explain itself? how does it enact itself? how does it pass itself on to the next generation?

Rhetoric was for 2300 years the dominant form of education for ruling class men in all European communities. It was an education designed to cultivate and form the attributes of community citizens and leaders. It trained boys and young men in the art of eloquentia, the art of persuasive public speech. For 2300 years ancient rhetoric formed the capstone of language and literacy

education in Europe. Anyone who became literate during this era became literate through a training in rhetoric. This extensive training in rhetoric was a formative experience shared by all the leading figures of Western civilisation: Cicero, Augustine, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Bacon, Milton. Thus rhetoric is almost certainly as fundamental to the definition of Western culture as Greek philosophy or Hebraic Christianity.

Res and *Verba*

Rhetorical education had two poles, two faces, to it. It was an education in cultural content called *inventio* and an education in language called *elocutio*. In Latin content was called *res*; and language was called *verba*. Ancient rhetoric embraced both *res* and *verba*. It studied both the substance and meanings of things - *res* - and the ways of formulating and describing things for effect and impact - *verba*.

Rhetorical education was a preparation, an initiation into a rhetorical culture and social life. That is, rhetoric was not only a form of education, it was a form of life, a set of practices used in social and public life. Thus rhetorical education taught life practices, practices that could be used in one's personal, social, public and professional life.

The Rhetoric of Declamation

However rhetorical education continued to survive during times when the culture and society had fallen away from the practices of rhetoric as a form of life. For example, rhetoric flourished in Byzantium, as an unbroken educational and ceremonial tradition from the ancient Greek rhetoricians right through to 1492 when its scholars fled to Florence with their ancient texts and knowledge of ancient Greek. It was these refugee rhetoricians who formed the kernel of the Renaissance, a renewal of interest in classical rhetoric that spread from Italy to Germany and England.

However, the rhetoric of Byzantium took the form of extravagant epideictic declamations, a practice at odds with the initial impulses and dispositions of ancient rhetoric. Epideictic is speeches of praise, and the Byzantine rhetoricians taught and performed rhetoric as a highly-wrought verbal art of flattery before the Emperor. However, epideictic was always one of the three genres of rhetoric named in ancient manuals of rhetoric.

The three genres of rhetoric

According to Aristotle there were three genres of rhetoric defined by their three social contexts.

- Epideictic rhetoric is a discourse of praise celebrating the heroes, values and matters that bound together a community. Its typical social occasion were ceremonial events, funerals, memorials, and so on.
- Deliberative rhetoric is a discourse of advice designed to evaluate and determine the best course of action in tricky situations of social conflict and uncertainty. Its typical social occasion is an assembly of decision makers.
- Forensic rhetoric is a judicial discourse bent on accusing or defending those suspected of wrong-doing. Its typical social locus is the courts.

These were the three principal contexts and kinds of rhetoric. Aristotle framed them in terms of the temporal mode of existence of their concerns: epideictic rhetoric concerns what is always with us, our identity, values and culture; it is a discourse of celebration and praise for our way of life. Deliberation concerns the future and framing a decision on what to do; it is a discourse of judgment and practical wisdom. Judicial rhetoric is concerned with the past, with what happened and how it should be put right; it is a discourse of accusation and defence. In the late medieval period, a rhetoric of letter-writing and a rhetoric of preaching were added.

Of course these rhetorics and the realities they appeal to in garnering conviction intersect. They are not pure and distinct dimensions of life or discourse separated by impermeable boundaries;

they intersect, contaminate and cross-fertilise each other. Even so, it helps to begin by thinking of their different social and institutional locations, their different purposes, and the way they frame their content differently-whether as matters to be celebrated, weighed or judged.

Rhetoric and modern critique

Let me draw out one moral for us in the twenty-first century if we are to renew our connections with ancient rhetoric, after a break of at least one century, perhaps two.

As you can see, rhetorical education is a functional education oriented to performance in social life, in the world. It is designed to form adults as citizens who can speak up in situations of power, citizens who understand the issues and considerations, who understand the res, the matters, the social substance, at issue in the debates or discussions. Rhetoric is a training in 'speaking up', not just an art of 'spruiking up' your speech. Speaking up is a matter of both *res* and *verba*, content and language.

However, rhetoric becomes corrupt when it focuses on language only. It is then that it becomes *'mere* rhetoric' as opposed to 'reality'; it becomes rhetoric as cynical manipulation; rhetoric as spin-doctoring and manipulation of people and public opinion. So, just as language and literacy pedagogy is always tempted to reduce itself to a focus on language alone, so too is rhetoric. These are standing temptations for language pedagogies.

Modern rhetoric was forced to define itself more in relation to *verba* because of the claims of the sciences and academic disciplines to a monopoly over *res*. This opened up a space for the development of the modern notion of critique or criticism, where criticism does not just mean the formation of appreciation and discernment which were the goals of epideictic discourse, but the formation of 'crap detectors' so that citizens could discern the hidden rhetoric of a text and resist it. Critique and critical literacy is thus the power to discern and resist the rhetoric of a text. In most modern critical theories, this rhetoric of the text is the interpreted as the ideology of the text.

Modern criticism is thus a disposition of suspicion, of negation and resistance. Whether grounded in a generalised critical reason or in access to an ontologically superior standpoint, critique is basically a form of reading, a way of resisting the rhetoric of the text, the power of the text. This stands in strong contrast to traditional rhetoric which was focused on both reading and speaking, both reception and performance, both resistance and identification, but more strongly on performance and writing, than consumption or reading.

Rhetoric and truth

However, even though traditional rhetoric was not only negative critique, its positivity was not a naïve fundamentalism or unexamined commitment to a particular point of view. For Aristotle, one of the key differences between rhetoric and dialectic on the one hand, and strict science on the other was that rhetoric and dialectic explored both sides of a question.

Rhetoric as a practice was committed to the view that there is always something to be said for the other position. Rhetoric did not think there was a deductive or royal road to the truth. It was committed to the articulation of both sides of any issue. Truth arose out of listening to competing positions. Truth is dialogic, not monologic. Truth is not a matter of deduction, but a matter of weighing equally plausible positions and interpretations. Just as Socrates believed the unexamined life not worth living, rhetoric believed the unexamined statement not worth believing. In my view ancient rhetoric has a balanced attitude to matters of doubt and belief, authority and proof, tradition and change. It is neither a postmodernist relativism nor a realist fundamentalism.

Rhetoric does not have a doctrine to teach, but nor does it simply teach suspicion of all doctrine or cultures on principle. Rather it teaches us to speak and listen in attunement with a community and to let that form our sense of truth. There is no truth outside the rhetorical speech and the developing discourse between members of a community.

The five phases of rhetorical performance

So far, I have covered two of the standard topics of ancient rhetoric: the two faces of res and verba; and the three kinds of rhetoric taught in ancient rhetoric, I now move onto another standard topic of ancient rhetorical education: the preparatory tasks or phases of activity involved in rhetorical performance. According to most rhetoric manuals, there are five parts, five steps, five phases, five moments, involved in planning and preparing an eloquent speech.

They are:

- *Inventio*: working out what to say, your ideas;
- *Dispositio*: putting what you say, your ideas, into an order that is cogent and convincing;
- *Elocutio*: polishing the language of what you are saying, putting your ideas into language that empowers it;
- *Memoria*: using memory strategies to remember the ideas and language you will use in your speech;
- *Actio*: the strategies of voice and gesture involved in convincing performance.

I will now make a few comments under each of these headings.

Two neglected phases: *Memoria* and *Actio*

Because rhetoric developed at the same time as writing, gradually it turned into the art of writing, instead of an art of speech. Inevitably the last two phases - *memoria* and *actio* - were left aside and neglected. The art of memory which was crucial for rhetoricians was replaced by encyclopedias and written notes. Memory was externalised from the soft-copy of the interacting real-time brain into the permanent hard-copy of books; and memory as an art, as a way of keeping things present, of keeping things in mind, of staying in touch with things, people, places and ideas, of keeping things available as resources for use at any time, has fallen into disuse and disrepute as rote learning. Memory has been transmuted from a trained faculty to an fluky matter that is basically uncontrolled and random. However, it is worth noting that people do still know how to remember in their private lives: the role of gifts, cards, photos, rings and tattoos, birthdays and so on are all ways of remembering, ways of keeping 'in play' in their fullness in our lives.

Actio

I have only begun exploring *actio*. My hunch is that we should go to performance studies, to the art of acting to reinvent a modern *actio*. The very term actio should remind us that performance does not just include the linguistic text, but the entire performance in all its multi-modality. Thus it should extend from the performative rhetoric of green peace activists on sky scrapers and at sea to the gestural rhetoric of Nicky Winmar, an Australian Aboriginal footballer, lifting his guernsey to point to the colour of skin in defiance of a jeering racist crowd of 'whitefellas'.

In the Communications Unit I am developing we are exploring *actio* by orienting the entire course to performance. Each afternoon students perform before an audience of other students, while the entire workshop - over two weeks - is oriented to a final performance in which teams of students participate in a march displaying their banners, placards, slogans, chants followed by a speech, skit and graphic display. This embedding of language as meaning making in a larger context of action that includes many other media of inscription and meaning making (painting, singing, designs, etc) is a lesson I learnt from the students who constructed the Journey of Respect.

I am finding the more I can situate language into a performative setting, the more students engage and learn with passion and enjoyment. So, for example even though one of the goals of the course is to improve the English literacy of students I do not do this by focusing directly on written text as a goal but by positioning writing as a means for learning the text patterns of speaking. Writing is a means towards speech, instead of speech being a means towards writing.

Inventio

Historically however, it is the first three tasks of rhetoric performance that have been most attended to in rhetoric textbooks: *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*. I will make a few short comments on these three capacities, capacities that rhetoricians need to exercise to speak up with power.

Inventio is concerned with ensuring that the speaker has the resources they need to persuade their audience. These resources will consist in their mastery of the themes, perspectives, concepts, commonplaces and discourses at play in the state of debate. Traditional rhetoric had a number of pedagogic strategies for dealing with *inventio*. One was to immerse students in the cultural archive of a field of discourse

Inventio should not be reduced to a necessary pre-task needed to provide some content so we can get on with the real task: teaching language. *Inventio* is not just a pre-task, it is a recursive engagement with the competing tendencies and interests of our socio-cultural situation. *Inventio* is not a matter of writing down a list of topics or of providing some stimulus materials such as photos or trips to the wild-life park. *Inventio* is itself dialogic, whether public or internal, a dialogue that is not complete until the text is complete and it is still operative in the reader or listener and their responses as the text does its work in them. So, we must not impose a temporal or instrumental narrative on the phases: they are cycle back on one another.

One way I have attempted to address *inventio* is not by providing students with heuristic formulas or pre-writing exercises, but by making them prepare and declaim speeches by indigenous speakers on the theme they are engaging with. This means that they learn to identify with the subject-position of an abstract theme by identifying with the person of the speaker 'voicing' that theme.

In future I intend to work towards blurring the boundary between declaiming someone else's speech and improvising one's own. I would like to invent performative activities-drama games-in which students both declaim and invent at once.

Dispositio

Dispositio is the way we order what we have to say so that one thing is said before another and thus provides a context or springboard for that next thing.

Thus, although a text is in one sense a seamless unity, a whole, in another sense it must be uttered one piece at a time. This is apparent in writing where we have such markers of textual movement as punctuation, paragraphs, and headings as well as the oral markers of 'first, second and finally'.

Formal speech-making is a productive site for engaging students with the necessity to develop a meta-discourse for staging what they say. In the communications unit, this metadiscourse is focused on last. Three areas of *dispositio* are selected out for attention: the introduction, enumerating the parts of one's speech and finally, the transitions from part to part.

The deeper sense of *dispositio* which is concerned with finding a persuasive underlying logic for dealing with the res at issue I have not really grappled with yet. I am sceptical of both modern heuristic formulas and also modern practices of 'critical thinking'. I intend instead to engage in a deeper study of ancient 'status theory' (Hermogenes) which spent two or three centuries formulating fourteen 'rules of thumb' for staging a debate to one's best advantage.

Elocutio

And so I come to the last phase in the tasks of ancient rhetoric: *elocutio*. Of the five parts of rhetoric we have already seen that the two performative stages - *memoria* and *actio* - have fallen into the background as rhetoric became more a training in the writing of speeches than the giving of them. Of the three preparatory phases - *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio* - we have already glanced at *inventio*, which is the concern with the content of our language, and at *dispositio* which is the way we divide our meaning up into chunks and arrange them so they form an unfolding and cogent text. If *inventio* is a concern with what we are saying and *dispositio* a concern with how to structure

what we say, then *elocutio* is a concern with how to word what we are saying. *Inventio* is what we want to say, *elocutio* is how to say it.

Elocutio is concerned with putting things into words, how we word and phrase things. The figures we deploy. *Elocutio* is a focus on the surface of the text, which words, which sounds, which echoes, which repetitions, which patterns, which intensifications, when to tighten the movement, when to relax it. This concern for the textual wording was studied as the figures of meaning and figures of speech, as tropes.

In traditional rhetoric there are dozens of terms for naming and discriminating the effects of language, in fact too many. Modern composition theory and practice, by contrast, is bereft of terms for assisting students in this matter. Poetics and stylistics were long ago assigned to literary studies and are no longer widely studied.

There are a few vague admonitions such as: vary the length of your sentences, use concrete words and fresh images, and such like. But there is very little explicit instruction or practice in how to write or speak well. Nor is linguistics of much assistance since its primary concern is to map the possibilities, not the actualities, of language forms and their effects. It is my experience that we can raid traditional rhetoric for assistance in this matter and thereby provide much more explicit scaffolding for adult efforts to develop their language capabilities.

In the Communications Unit I have addressed issues of *elocutio* by developing an explicit pedagogy focused on what we have called 'text patterns'. Each day is given over to the study and practicing of one text pattern and the final speech is in fact the combination of all these text patterns.

The text patterns I selected for attention were: slogan, *isocolon, anaphora, antithesis*, model and antimodel (Perelman), metaphor, *partitio, enumeratio* and transitions. We studied these patterns and noticed them in speeches and texts by others. We also practiced them in writing and speech. As an indication of this aspect of the curriculum, I have included as **Appendix 1** a sample of student work using the text pattern, tri-colon with anaphora. The playfulness, passion and pleasure at work in these text patterns is obvious. I have also included as **Appendix 2** a student speech to show the final speech structure that students 'imitate'.

Pedagogy and *ethos*

In order to complete the picture of the tradition of rhetoric, I will glance at two final matters that generated much reflection and theorisation in ancient rhetoric manuals: the proper pedagogy of rhetoric and the ethical demeanour of the good rhetorician.

To deal with the first question, pedagogy, the most revealing fact is that to my knowledge every single text on rhetoric (let's say there are 100) is written as a manual for teachers of rhetoric. So, the theoretical dimension of rhetoric was framed as the categories, concepts and expositions, explanations and so on practically needed by teachers in order to construct their curriculum. The reflective texts of rhetoric were the practical reflections of educators, not the abstract inquiries of academics. For example, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* consists of twelve books written for the tutors of the Emperor's son. Rhetoric texts were written by and for teachers as a curriculum resource.

Exercitatio

I will just summarise some of the main concepts that were developed to capture the pedagogy of rhetoric. The skills of the rhetorician are developed and maintained by exercitatio. Exercitatio are practices, the exercises, that ensure that the rhetorician is never left speechless, embarrassed, or ashamed by ensuring that the rhetorician has a copia rerum ac verborum - a multitude of ideas and linguistic formulations - at their disposal.

This copia of ideas and ways of saying things exist because of the skills for generating new ideas and ways of wording ideas. That is, the skills of rhetoric are aimed not at rote learning but at being able to create ideas and language when it is needed. Rhetoric arms the rhetorician with strategies

for creating ideas and language on call: it does not weigh them down with preformulated or prescripted speech. This is because the central value of all rhetoric is aptum, the appropriateness of speech to the specific circumstances of situation of utterance.

One way of thinking about rhetoric and speech is that they are the necessary supplement of literacy and written text. Rhetoric is concerned to mediate the relationship between written legal texts and canonical cultural texts to the diversity and particularity of actual situations. Although cultures, communities and organisations try to codify themselves in writing, the practical application of these written principles to actual situations is a matter of practical wisdom. Rhetoric comes into it own when the written rules run out. Rhetoric is not intent on training students in prescripted routines or formulas but in assisting them to possess resources for invention and initiative, a cultural capital that can be deployed as needed. Exercitatio consists of the exercises for forming and cultivating the inventiveness and creativity of the rhetorician.

I will not attempt to detail the exercises and activities used by rhetoric educators; that would take far to long and is beyond my present competence. However, hopefully a sense of them will come out when I describe the activities I have recently devised for students at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

Ethics and truth

Finally I come to the question of ethics, of *ethos*. What sort of a person was ancient rhetoric trying to grow up? This was always a central matter for reflection, because in ancient education it was clear that education was about forming the character and habitus of students, their social demeanour and way of being in the world, their way of being with others and their way of being with themselves. Education was not just a cognitive matter, a matter of knowledge or skills. Education was designed to transform the whole person, to mould the person into a specific ethos, a specific cultural way of being. It was also a central matter of reflection and contention because philosophy staked its claim as the central paradigm for education, but lost out to rhetoric. Ever since its defeat at the hands of rhetoric, philosophy has campaigned against rhetoric accusing it of not taking the objectivity of truth seriously.

We already have a sense of the ethical attributes of the person ideally produced by a rhetorical education. They are someone attuned to the tensions, ambiguities, and possibilities of social situations and know how to speak to these situations in ways that clarify them for those concerned. They have a way with words. They can speak up. They can organize their thoughts and speak cogently.

They are not dogmatic, they can see both sides of an issue and can weigh their relative merits. They do not claim to already possess the truth but believe that the truth will emerge from the dialogues, discussions and disputes of those involved. They believe that the truth has to be formulated consensually by those involved on the ground, not imposed from above. They believe that the truth has to be framed in terms of the culture and interests of those involved, not by reference to some impersonal or universal standard.

Rhetoricians are like pragmatists: the truth is what will work, what will stick, what can be lived with, what can be accepted as insightful and beneficial to the people. The rhetorician is a person who can say the right thing at the right time. The person who can change a situation, unblock a situation, by the timeliness and aptness of their contribution or intervention. The art of rhetoric is an art of practical reason, the art of 'reading situations creatively, setting out positions clearly, appraising alternatives with prudence and practical judgment

Appendix 1

Examples of student 'tricolons with anaphora'

Unity	it's coming together	it's learning together	it's the power of one
Traditional law	it's spiritual	it's strong	it's cultural
Aboriginality	it's original	it's first	it's forever
Archie Roach	he's talented	he's original	he's aboriginal
A family	always cares	always understands	always together
The library	you can relax and read	you can access the Internet	you can take the family
Health advertising	it's effective	it's educational	it's factual
Environment	caring for our land	caring for our wild life	caring for our lifestyle
Sport	it's fun	it's team work	it's healthy
Emus	powerful taste	powerful legs	powerful speed
Batchelor	is the tidiest town	is the gateway to Litchfield National Park	is the place of study for Indigenous people
Eating healthy	is good for our body	is good for energy	is good for fitness
Hygiene	is important	is healthy	is cleanliness
Nicky Winmar	He's good	He's great	He's my hero
My kids	they are great	they are lovely	they are mine
Power	is unity	is strength	is freedom
Sorry	is what we want	is what we need	is what we deserve
Cultural identity	cultural identity is for you	cultural identity is for me	cultural identity is for us
Australia	our home	our land	our country
Elle McPherson	she's lovely	she's sexy	she's beautiful
Our class	it's good	it's great	it's exciting
Football	it's rough	it's tough	it's a man's game
Ernie Dingo	He is funny	He is inspirational	he's a role model
Hunting	it's education	it's fun	it's adventure
Sea	it gives us food	it gives us pleasure	it gives us beauty
Honey ants	we trackem	we digem	we eatem
Love	Love is kind	Love is happiness	Love is forever
Birds	birds of prey	birds of paradise	birds of songs
Land	it's spiritual	it's life	it's the provider of all things
Black man	lose not courage	lose not faith	lose not identity
Aboriginal ways	is we-ness	is us-ness	is togetherness

Girls	we giggle	we talk	we have fun
Students	we learn	we study	we pass
Parents	they're good	they're loving	they're understanding
God	God is almighty	God is awesome	God is in this place

Appendix 2

Example of a student speech

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Good morning elders, lecturers, and fellow students. My name is …. ….. . I come from a small and rural town in North Queensland called Ayr and belong to the Birri-Gubba tribe which inhabit that area. This is my first year at Batchelor and I am currently studying primary education.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Before I begin my speech I would like to respect, thank and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which we meet.

INTRODUCE TOPIC

In this speech I will be talking to you about the necessity and importance of making a stand in our communities. I will be talking about the results and outcomes of making a stand and whom it will effect and influence being males and females, indigenous and non-indigenous and political and non-political.

ENUMERATE THE PARTS OF THE SPEECH

Firstly, I will explain that making a stand is necessary. Secondly, I will describe what Australia will be like when we, indigenous people, make a stand in our communities. Thirdly, I will paint a picture of what Australia will be like if we don't stand up and be counted. I will end by restating the importance of making a stand and standing up for what we believe.

TRANSITION TO THE 1st PART

I now come to the first part of my speech. In this part I will explain that making a stand and standing up for what we believe is important and is a necessity.

ANTITHESIS

I was recently at a community meeting where the speaker was talking about an issue that I, along with many others strongly disagreed with. But what did we do? Nothing. Standing up for what you believe is not a right. Making a stand in your community is a responsibility that you and I must carry out.

STATE YOUR THESIS

Making a stand in the community is a necessity and responsibility that everyone, both young and old, needs to be involved in today, tomorrow and forever, and we need to do it now.

Now is the time to fight for equality, equity and social justice.

Now is the time to make a difference in society and speak up about our issues and concerns.

Now is the time to stand up and be counted.

TRANSITION TO 2nd PART

Now that I have enlightened you on the importance of making a stand, I will now paint a picture of what Australia will be like when we make a stand in our communities.

MODEL

First, imagine and picture what Australia will be like when indigenous people make a firm and solid stand in their communities. Standing up for their ideas, beliefs, and their culture.

When we make a stand, our people will be recognised.

When we make a stand, our people will be respected and

When we make a stand, reconciliation will inhabit and dwell in this country we call home.

TRANSITION TO 3rd PART

You can see what will happen when we make a stand, but in the next part of my speech, I will paint a picture of what Australia will be like if we don't make a stand.

ANTIMODEL

Now, let me paint a picture of what Australia will be like if we don't take the responsibility and duty of standing up and speaking up in our communities. If we don't make a stand, our people will get left out of the important decision making for our country that effects and influences the indigenous people and communities in Australia.

If we don't make a stand, our people will be looked down on as inferior instead of equal.

If we don't make a stand, our future generations will have no hope in the steady and ongoing process of reconciliation.

TRANSITION TO THE LAST PART

We don't want Australia to end up like this. Do we? In coming to the end of my speech, I will declare again the importance of making a stand in your community.

SLOGAN

Do you stand up and speak up for your ideas, beliefs and culture in your community? Do you want the indigenous people of this country to be recognised, respected and reconciled? Let's make a stand. It's up to you, me, and up to the future generations of indigenous people to make a difference to this country. *So don't stand around, stand up and make a difference in your community, in your state and in our country.*

Thank you for listening. It has be both a privilege and a pleasure to speak and share with you.

Bionote

Dr Rob McCormack spent many years working to formulate a coherent theory and practice of Adult Basic Education as an substantive education for 'second chance adults'. Recently he completed a PhD titled: *Adult Basic Education as Practical Philosophy: an hermeneutic account*, in which he argues that ABE should construe its primary outcome as *phronesis* (practical wisdom), not *theoria* (knowledge), as the *sensus communis* of a *polis*, not the paradigms of an academic discipline. He now teaches at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Northern Territory, Australia.